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Promoting the development of creativity in students

Abstract

Creativity may contribute to student success in each of ASCA's key areas of student development: career, academic, and personal-social. However, the wide range of theoretical constructs of creativity may impede school counselors seeking methods for supporting creative development. This literature review explores various definitions of creativity and suggests a recently proposed developmental model may be most useful to school counselors in conceptualizing all students as creative and capable of growth. Using this model, the paper examines research into factors influencing creativity, including personality, self-efficacy, appropriate feedback, the perception of judgment, mood and affect, and motivation, and suggests practical ways school counselors can help shape the school environment to encourage creativity.

PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVITY IN STUDENTS

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Abstract

Creativity may contribute to student success in each of ASCA's key areas of student development: career, academic, and personal-social; however, the wide range of theoretical constructs of creativity may impede school counselors seeking methods for supporting creative development. This literature review explores various definitions of creativity and suggests a recently proposed developmental model may be most useful to school counselors in conceptualizing all students as creative and capable of growth. Using this model, the paper examines research into factors influencing creativity, including personality, self-efficacy, appropriate feedback, the perception of judgment, mood and affect, and motivation, and suggests practical ways school counselors can help shape the school environment to encourage creativity.

Promoting the Development of Creativity in Students

Most school counselors, if asked, would probably agree that creativity is an important quality to encourage in students. Asked to provide further clarification of the concept, however, one might find a variety of answers. Some counselors might suggest creativity relates only to imaginative students, gifted students, or students with artistic ability. Others might think of creativity more in terms of so-called creative geniuses like Mozart, the likes of which a counselor may never encounter. Still others might define creativity primarily as innovation and reflect on national calls to develop a creative class that would give the United States an economic advantage (Florida, 2005).

Although creativity is usually related to novel ideas, Craft (2006) insisted on the development of wisdom alongside creativity, suggesting that innovation must always be examined critically for its effects on a wider context. Yet this insistence seems somewhat inappropriate for a definition of creativity that includes the imaginative stories of young children engaged in dramatic play. The field of creativity research, though complex, has begun to acknowledge the problems of defining creativity and to consider how the study of eminent creators may need to be different from the study of more everyday creativity, as well as how various types or domains of creativity may overlap.

This paper will summarize creativity research, presenting a number of definitions and models that may help school counselors come to a definition and a model of creativity from a developmental perspective. The paper will also present research on the social and environmental factors that may encourage or discourage creativity. Finally, suggestions will be made for the application of these ideas in a school setting and possible directions for further research.

Defining Creativity

One of the central problems in creativity research has been the lack of a widely agreed upon definition. In a content analysis of ninety peer-reviewed journal articles on the topic of creativity from 1996-2002, Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004) found that although creativity was frequently listed as an outcome variable, only 38% of articles provided a definition for the construct, and definitions varied within this group. Sternberg & Lubart (1992) noted the study of creativity has been focused in two areas.

Psychometric approaches have considered abilities and personality attributes or have tried to create models that describe the creative process. Social-psychological approaches have investigated motivation and social-cultural variables affecting creativity. This type of research has also included case studies of creative lives and historiometric approaches that consider the cultural and historical contextual factors that have produced creative individuals. These different approaches necessarily make use of different definitions of creativity.

The problems defining creativity have been further complicated by myths about the concept among both the general public and researchers (Plucker et al., 2004). A common myth is that creativity is an innate capacity people are either born with or born without. Creativity has also been associated with mental illness, deviant behavior, mysticism, "soft" psychology, and hippies. To create more clarity in the field, Plucker et al. (2004) proposed the following definition of creativity based on a synthesis of frequently cited elements in definitions of creativity: "Creativity is the interaction among *aptitude, process, and environment* by which an individual or group produces a *perceptible product* that is both *novel and useful* as defined within a *social context*" (p.

90). This definition seems aligned with research in the field of creativity; most articles at least note the importance of a creative product being both novel and useful, which involves an awareness of the social context within which something is judged useful. On the other hand, creativity researchers may purposely choose definitions of creativity involving a product, in order to provide a stronger basis for empirical study.

The focus within Plucker et al.'s (2004) definition on products and social contexts are in marked contrast to Vygotsky's classification of creativity as a "human act that gives rise to something new...regardless of whether what is created is a physical object or some mental or emotional construct that lives within the person who created it and is only known to him" (as cited in Fernández-Cárdenas, 2008, p. 240). Vygotsky's definition includes the aspect of novelty and implies usefulness (to the individual with the construct) but largely ignores the aspect of a social context judging the construct as appropriate or useful. Furthermore, mental or emotional constructs may be more difficult to study empirically, although some researchers have suggested possible methods (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Fernández-Cárdenas, 2008; Vass, Littleton, Miell, & Jones, 2008).

We have seen that the study of creativity has involved the consideration of many factors: process, product, personality, and contextual factors. Definitions of creativity typically involve novelty and usefulness yet sometimes also acknowledge intrapersonal insights. Researchers have proposed a number of theoretical models of creativity. Counselors may find these models more or less useful depending on the definition of creativity upon which the model is based.

Models of Creativity

One of the most frequently cited models for creativity is Amabile's (1996) componential model. Amabile (1996), defining creativity as responses or products to a heuristic task judged both novel and useful, created a model outlining three components necessary for creativity. The first component is domain-relevant skills, which includes factual knowledge of a specific domain. The second component is creativity-relevant skills, which involves global cognitive styles, divergent thinking, suspension of judgment, and knowledge of heuristics, or novel ways of approaching problems. The final component, task motivation, involves the person's attitude toward the task and his or her reasons for undertaking it.

Building on this work, Sternberg & Lubart (1992) broke the components down further into six resources needed for creativity: intelligence, knowledge, thinking styles, personality, motivation, and a supportive/evaluative environment. The authors also suggested an "investment theory" of creativity, in which creativity essentially means to "buy low and sell high" (p. 2), or to pick up on an idea that has potential but is not in fashion yet and promote it to a wider audience at some later time when it can be accepted. Like Amabile's (1996) model, this model depends on a product within a specific social context.

In addition to models focused on resources needed for creative production, a number of developmental models that encompass both types of definitions described above have been proposed. Cohen (1989) suggested creativity could be viewed as a developmental continuum of creative behaviors, including seven levels of development. The levels do not represent a strict stage model, because as Cohen noted, people can be at

multiple levels at a time across various domains. Cohen suggested Levels 2 and 4 might be of most interest to educators. The seven levels she proposed are as follows: 1)

Learning Something New: Universal Novelty;

2) Making Connections that are Rare Compared to Peers; 3) Demonstrating Talents; 4)

Developing Heuristics; 5) Producing Information; 6) Creating by Extending a Field; 7)

Creating by Revolutionizing a Field.

The benefit of Cohen's (1998) model is that it acknowledges definitions like Vygotsky's, in which even the construction of new knowledge is seen as a creative act (implying all people have the capacity for creativity), while still clearly noting the importance of creative contributions of eminent creators. One disadvantage of the model, however, is that Levels 3-5 seems more like necessary interacting components of any creative process rather than independent stages. Compare, for instance, Levels 3-5 with the components of Amabile's (1996) previously described model.

A recently proposed model, however, builds on some of Cohen's ideas while clarifying some of its ambiguities. Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) proposed a nuanced model of creativity, which they termed the 4 C's of Creativity. The authors proposed that the model be viewed as a "developmental trajectory of creativity in a person's life" (p. 6). Rather than a rigid stage model for the development of creativity, the model provides a framework for understanding creativity at various levels. The authors noted nearly all levels can be experienced by almost everyone, and people may be at different levels of creativity in various domains throughout life, depending on their motivation and acquired knowledge or expertise in a given domain.

The 4 C's of creativity include Big-C, Pro-C, little-c, and mini-c, which will each be described here. The Big-C level of creativity describes great contributions or eminent creators, such as Albert Einstein or Sigmund Freud (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009).

Theories in this area involve in-depth case studies and approaches that try to delineate the personality, thought processes, and environmental and historical factors that contribute to creative greatness. Big-C status is often only achieved posthumously.

The Pro-c level of creativity recognizes the contributions of expert professionals in a field who have not yet reached Big-C status, or a "developmental and effortful progression beyond little-c" (p. 5). Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) related this level of creativity to research about the acquisition of expertise, which has suggested it takes ten years or more to become an expert in a field. An example of Pro-c creativity would be writing a study regarded as innovative enough for publication in an academic journal, as well as the creation of a new advertising technique, such as Mattel's decision to market toys directly to children.

While teachers or parents might judge a student project or poem creative, it unlikely represents the level of domain-specific expertise required for a judgment as creative by experts in that field. Therefore, the little-c level of creativity recognizes the creative potential and creative products of average, or non-expert, people. Research on this level has involved defining how skills and motivations intersect to create something novel and useful in a certain context (Amabile, 1996; Plucker et al., 2004). Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) gave examples of a novice painter giving a painting to a friend, as well as the everyday creativity seen in schools, the workplace, home, and in social settings.

Finally, Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) defined mini-c as “the novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events” (p.73). Mini-c emphasizes the creative potential of the many over the unique contributions of a few and focuses on the processes of creative insights. Mini-c creativity includes the initial interpretations that can develop into novel and useful or even Big-C contributions. Examples include such insights as students applying a new problem-solving strategy, using a new brush stroke in painting, or making an argument for why Pluto should or should not be considered a planet.

Viewed through this framework, creativity is available to all people across a wide variety of domains. It includes both the eminent creators of the world and the creative insights of a kindergarten student making personal connections with a storybook. The developmental aspect of this framework makes it appropriate for school counselors. By viewing creativity as a strength available to all, it also has the advantage of being aligned with positive psychology and the strengths-based counseling movement, the rise of which was made evident in a recent *Professional School Counseling* special issue devoted to the topic (Auger & Milson, 2008).

In addition, creativity may be important in each of the three key areas of student development described by the American School Counseling Association’s National Standards for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 1997, as cited in Stone & Dahir, 2004): academic, career, and personal-social. Students who are creative academically may demonstrate more postformal thought and higher-order thinking skills like elaboration and are more likely to find problems and propose better solutions (Grigorenko, Jarvin, Tan, & Sternberg, 2008; Wu & Chiou, 2008). Those who learn to be

creative may also become innovators in their future careers, developing from little-c to Pro-c or Big-C creativity. Finally, in the personal-social realm, some evidence suggests creativity is a key aspect of successful functioning. Preliminary research has identified creativity as a factor in finding strategies for solving social problems (Mouchiroud & Bernoussi, 2008) and for achieving a positive social identity (Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish, & Hodge, 1996; Shinnar, 2008).

Of the models presented here, the Four C's model may be the most useful to school counselors. The remainder of this paper will review research from the perspective of this model, focusing primarily on the mini-c and little-c levels. The following will describe further the differences between the two and research related to encouraging development from mini-c to little-c creativity.

Mini-c Creativity: Increasing Idea Generation and Divergent Thinking

Mini-c creativity involves creative insights and intrapersonal judgments of meaning. Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) suggested mini-c creativity is best studied using self-assessments and microgenetic methods, which combine observations and participants' explanations. If mini-c creativity is primarily about idea generation, research in this area might study the intrapersonal and contextual factors that make divergent thinking and connection-making possible. One of these factors may be personality.

Sternberg & Lubart (1992) found adults who measured higher in personality traits including tolerance of ambiguity, willingness to overcome obstacles, willingness to grow, willingness to take sensible risks, and belief in oneself, scored higher on a number of creative production tasks. Adults who were considered high risk-takers also made significantly more creative products than low risk-takers. Similarly Choi (2004) found a

creative personality, defined as opposite a cautious personality, related positively to creative performance in a classroom setting. Openness to experience also seems related to creativity (Prabhu, Sutton, & Sauser, 2008), as does self-efficacy (Sternberg & Lubart, 1992; Choi, 2004; Prabhu et al., 2008). Students may naturally differ in their degree of openness to experience, risk-taking, and self-efficacy, so it is important to consider research related to the deliberate manipulation of contextual factors with the purpose of bringing out those traits. Some of these factors include the perception of judgment or evaluation, mood and affect, and motivational orientation.

Suspension of Judgment

In the mini-c stage, the temporary suspension of judgment seems to be a key factor in producing ideas. Divergent thinking, although only a part of creativity (Plucker et al., 2004), is one factor in producing novel ideas, so research has been conducted to determine what may increase divergent thinking (Basadur, Runco, & Vega, 2000). Although a variety of training programs in divergent thinking exist and have been shown effective (see Starko, 2005 for a summary), one of the more common and easily used techniques for idea generation is brainstorming. Osborn (1963) developed the principle of brainstorming with the idea that it is possible to create a higher quantity of ideas when judgment is deferred. The four rules of brainstorming include the following:

- (1) *Criticism is ruled out.* Adverse judgment of ideas must be withheld until later.
- (2) *"Free-wheeling" is welcomed.* The wilder the idea, the better; it is easier to tame down than to think up.
- (3) *Quantity is wanted.* The greater the number of ideas, the more the likelihood of useful ideas.

(4) *Combination and improvement are sought.* In addition to contributing ideas of their own, participants should suggest how ideas of others can be turned into better ideas, or how two or more ideas can be joined into still another idea (p. 156).

Although brainstorming has most often been related to groups, it has been noted that individuals who brainstormed alone and then worked with others to combine ideas created a higher quantity and quality of ideas than those brainstorming in a group (Dunnette, Campbell, & Jastad, 1963; Paulus, Dzindolet, Poletes, & Camacho, 1993, as cited in Starko, 2005). This research seems to suggest individuals may feel inhibited in a group despite the brainstorming rules about suspending judgment. Regardless of whether brainstorming is best in a group or for individuals, free association and the suspension of judgment seem to be an important part of idea generation.

Although the cited studies on brainstorming were conducted with adults in work environments, Vass et al. (2008) observed similar strategies in an ethnographic study of the collaborative writing activities of 7-9 year olds. During the writing process, researchers observed two dynamic and circular phases: content generation, in which new ideas were uncritically accumulated, and content review, in which students evaluated ideas based on appeal and appropriateness. During the content generation phase, which might be related to mini-c insights, children used an improvisational style, drawing on emotions and prior experiences through singing and acting to generate ideas for their poems. Children did not evaluate their ideas but instead used collective free association in a style of discourse known to linguists as “collaborative floor.” This overlapping and emotionally expressive style of conversation is more common in play and informal

settings. Its purpose is primarily to maintain good social relations because its focus is on incorporating and building upon others' ideas. The improvisational atmosphere during these activities may be similar to brainstorming in helping students delay judgments and take creative risks in the classroom.

Beghetto (2009) also wrote about mini-c creativity in the classroom, but focused on teacher responses to students' unexpected answers. Beghetto explained that a previous study had found that when pre-service teachers received unexpected, but possibly creative or meaningful, answers, they frequently used soft dismissal strategies to keep students on topic, rather than following up on the answers. Beghetto argued that dismissals, if given habitually, might discourage students from taking creative intellectual risks in the classroom and instead encourage students to respond only with attempts to guess the teacher's preferred answer. In addition to creating a judgment-free atmosphere, counselors may also need to consider the type of mood or affect in the classroom when attempting to encourage creativity.

Affect and Creativity

Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, and Staw (2005) found in their study of workplace creativity that positive affect was significantly and positively related to creativity, which the authors suggested was because positive affect may increase cognitive flexibility and broaden attention. The study also found evidence of "incubation," which is defined as creative production following a period of time spent away from the task and which may occur due to increases in cognitive flexibility lasting beyond the actual positive mood. In the study, incubation periods lasted up to two days after participants described positive affect. The authors also noted that due to the frequently positive affective *responses* to

creative production, a cycle might be induced in which positive affect and creativity are circular and result in increased creativity, particularly if ideas are well-received.

Similarly, in a meta-analysis of mood-creativity research, Baas, De Dreu, and Nijstad (2008) found positive moods produced more creativity than mood-neutral controls and negative moods in situations when the task was framed as enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding. (In situations in which the task was more serious, a focus on extrinsic rewards and a serious tone produced more creativity). More specifically, positive activating moods with an approach motivation (such as happiness) and negative activating moods like anger were associated with higher creativity than deactivating moods like relaxation or sadness.

Perhaps the most important finding for school counselors in mood research, however, is that fear and anxiety as either general moods or in response to real or perceived rejections of creative ideas resulted in decreased creativity and negative responses to creative production (Amabile et al., 2005; Baas et al., 2008). The detrimental effect of fear and anxiety on creativity has noteworthy implications for schools, especially in the current culture of high-stakes standardized testing. The research suggests creative production is highest in a positive atmosphere in which risk-taking is encouraged and ideas are, at least initially, explored separate from evaluation. Creating this type of atmosphere requires considering students' motivation for completing tasks.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation may be a factor in mini-c creativity. Some of the same factors that affect the classroom atmosphere also affect motivation. For instance, the collaborative and unrestrained idea-gathering approach of brainstorming seems related to

studies that have shown children in noncompetitive settings and those given choices over task materials produced more creative collages than those with more constraints or in competitive settings (Amabile, 1982; Amabile & Gitomer, 1984). Counselors encouraging students to generate ideas should consider students' motivation for the task and their choices in how to complete it. The research on motivation will be considered more fully in the following section, however, because it has most often been studied using techniques that involve evaluation of a product, rather than observations of how personal knowledge is constructed.

Little-c: Evaluating Products without Destroying Creativity

Most definitions of creativity note the importance of appropriateness. Creativity is not simply novelty; it also involves usefulness in a particular social context. Craft (2006) in particular noted the need for creativity to be taught alongside wisdom, encouraging students to critically examine their ideas and consider the effects of those ideas on the community and within broader social contexts. Although, as Crain (2005) noted, developmentalists have expressed dismay at the suppression of children's independent thought due to socialization into conventions, creativity research acknowledges the necessity of learning some of those conventions in order to push a field beyond its current state. Educators are in the precarious position of teaching conventions and providing feedback based on those conventions while still providing the conditions necessary for risk-taking and innovation.

Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) expressed this dilemma through the metaphor of the Goldilocks Principal. Of three students, one was overpraised and never received feedback; another was discouraged and judged harshly; and a third received both

encouragement and appropriate feedback. Only the third was not stunted in his or her creative development. As students move from personal insights into little-c creativity, more domain-specific knowledge, received through feedback, training, or general experience, is needed.

Unfortunately little research exists on exactly how and when this feedback should be given. Beghetto (2007) wrote about the need for classroom teachers to encourage creativity within the constraints of the classroom and proposed teachers use the metaphor of ideational code-switching to find a balance. As in the linguistic code-switching of a multi-lingual individual, who must adapt his or her language to the constraints of a particular situation, ideational code switching involves moving from personally meaningful ideas (mini-c) to interpersonally meaningful or useful ones (little-c). Beghetto suggested three ways teachers could do this. The first is taking time to listen and explore students' responses to questions, rather than simply dismissing unexpected or incorrect responses. The second is cueing students when their ideas do not make sense in the context of the task at hand. The third is providing opportunities for students to move back and forth between the two. Beghetto advised teachers develop a routine for students to explore their original ideas and then re-express them in light of new information.

Although more research is needed to test Beghetto's (2007) proposal of ideational code-switching, the ethnographic study cited previously also seems to suggest that the movement between idea generation and idea evaluation is part of the creative process. In their observational study of collaborative writing among 7-9 year olds, Vass et al. (2008) found that, in contrast to the uncritical nature of the content generation phase, during the content review phase students evaluated ideas based both on appeal, which involved

emotional or subjective judgments, and appropriateness, which involved explicit argumentation about what made sense or fit best.

An important body of research in the little-c category involves studies into the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on creative production. This research has made evident that increasing the salience of extrinsic reasons for doing a creative task (such as by having adults think about extrinsic reasons for writing, or having people contract for a reward in exchange for completing a creative task) results in significantly lower creativity than when intrinsic motivation is more salient (Amabile, 1982; Amabile & Gitomer, 1984; Amabile, 1985; Amabile, Hennessey, & Grossman, 1986). Although extrinsic motivation has been shown at times to increase creativity, this seems limited to special circumstances when prior intrinsic motivation is aligned closely with extrinsic motivation, such as when rewards show the value of a contribution one was already engaged in due to intrinsic motivation for the task (Hennessey & Amabile, 1998). It may also be possible to “immunize” people against the detrimental effects of extrinsic motivation when it cannot be avoided. Hennessey and Zbikowski (1993) found 15-minute training periods that focused children on the intrinsic reasons for completing tasks and emphasized the importance of thinking about those reasons more than extrinsic reasons, resulted in significantly higher creative performance than in students without the training.

Some researchers have noted that in situations of low interest to students or of a more serious nature, extrinsic motivation may be necessary (Baas et al., 2008). In general, though, creativity is more prevalent when students are intrinsically motivated. Children moving from mini-c to little-c creativity must transition from generating ideas to learning more domain-specific knowledge and receiving feedback about those ideas

within the conventions of the domain. Helping students to focus on intrinsic reasons for completing tasks may help offset some of the possible negative effects of this evaluation.

Directions for Future Research

One of the most crucial areas for future research is determining the most appropriate ways of providing feedback to help students develop skills without stunting their creativity. Research related to the formation of creative self-efficacy would also be useful in helping educators create conditions and teach attitudes that would build self-efficacy.

In addition, it has been demonstrated here that by providing certain environmental conditions, educators can increase students' creativity. Future research might attempt to answer whether skills specific to creativity can be isolated and taught to students. Grigorenko et al. (2008) attempted to create proficiency scales for measuring creativity in specific academic domains; however, no research conducted using these scales was found. Creativity training programs for adults have been shown to at least temporarily increase participants' problem finding ability as well as fluency, flexibility, and originality (Fontenot, 1993; Karwowski & Soszynski, 2008). More research is needed to determine if these programs are effective with children, if results are long-term, and exactly which factors in the programs relate to the increased creativity. Although many questions remain unanswered, the research that is available has broad implications for school counselors.

Application

School counselors can take a number of specific actions to encourage the development of creativity. First, because creativity is closely related to intrinsic

motivation (Amabile, 1982; Amabile & Gitomer, 1984; Amabile, 1985; Amabile et al., 1986), school counselors should consider how to focus students on intrinsic reasons for learning. School counselors could present guidance lessons or staff development workshops based on Hennessey and Zbikowski's (1993) research about immunizing students against the effects of reward. These lessons would acknowledge that while extrinsic reasons like grades and adult approval do exist, focusing on enjoyable reasons for completing a task may actually help increase student performance.

In order to get students involved in areas of high interest and also provide them with the critical feedback piece of creative development, counselors could form partnerships with creative professionals who become individual mentors or lead workshops, following the lead of the UK, which has a government-funded Creative Partnerships initiative (Miles, 2007). Counselors could also begin a program of faculty-led clubs in areas of faculty/student interest, as described in Logan and Scarborough (2008). Involvement in extracurricular and community activities that require initiative taking may also encourage creativity (Larson, 2000). Finally, counselors should consider creating student task forces on issues students care about and using techniques like brainstorming for creative problem solving of those issues.

Because idea generation requires risk-taking, counselors should consider ways to create a risk-friendly environment. Encouraging a positive mood and playful or improvisational atmosphere with an "other-orientation" may help students generate ideas and limit evaluation of ideas in collaborative work (Amabile et al., 2005; Baas et al., 2008; Vass et al., 2008). Counselors should think about ways to encourage this type of atmosphere in school throughout the day, but perhaps particularly in guidance lessons, as

the positive affect generated in those lessons could increase creativity in subsequent academic work for up to two days later (Amabile et al., 2005). [See Appendix A for an example of a game counselors could use to create positive affect and encourage risk-taking].

School counselors may also consider how to use this information in high-anxiety circumstances, such as test-taking and paper-writing. By teaching students about the effects of positive affect on creativity and possibly training students in a few methods for manipulating their own mood, counselors may help students cope with and excel in these stressful situations. Sharing the negative effects of fear and anxiety with parents, teachers, and administrators may also focus school officials on helping students view challenges more positively.

Perhaps most importantly, school counselors must understand that creativity is not limited to students identified as gifted or artistic. They should build a school discourse around creativity that acknowledges its importance in self-expression, social/interpersonal problem-solving, collaboration, and contributing useful solutions for school and community problems. Although more research on creative self-efficacy is needed, counselors should do what they can to encourage students to view themselves as creative. As Choi, (2004) found, creative self-efficacy was related to increased creative performance and was influenced by supportive leadership and an open group climate. School counselors adopting a developmental model of creativity have the potential to be that supportive leader in a school. If they wish to encourage the creative development of students, they must strive to create a positive school atmosphere and advocate for a balance between creative risk-taking and providing appropriate feedback.

Appendix A

Yes, And...

This is a lively story telling game to get imaginations flowing, and to illustrate the first rule of improv, which is to say yes to whatever scene or reality your partner presents to you. This works well in groups of three or four. The first person begins telling a story. After the first two or three sentences, he or she passes it on to Person Two. Person Two picks up the story with the words “Yes, and” and then continues for two or three sentences. Then Person Three picks up the story, also beginning with the words, “Yes, and.” Helpful instructions are to ask participants to continue the story line or voice from the first person. So if the person says, “One day, I was walking down the street and saw a huge, purple elephant,” then Person Two continues in the “I” voice: “Yes, and when I looked way up, I saw a tiny mouse sitting on the elephant’s back.” Let the story continue for three or four minutes.

[Activity adapted from Power of Hope (N.D.) *Creative facilitation 2: The art of facilitation manual*. Seattle, WA: Author.]

This activity demonstrates how imagination can expand when people elaborate on other’s ideas and how an environment of “saying yes,” rather than one of judgment or evaluation, can promote risk-taking and creativity. Processing questions may involve asking how participants felt during the activity, what the mood was like in the room, how working together allowed them to expand their creativity, etc. It may also be helpful to demonstrate or have the group experience the opposite; allow participants to try the exercise once saying “no,” or deliberately changing or ignoring others’ ideas and then processing the difference between the two approaches.

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